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THE CITY OF TARSUS AND THE ARAB-BYZANTINE FRONTIERS IN EARLY AND MIDDLE ʿABBĀSID TIMES

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I

The ancient settlement of Tarsus is best known for that part of its history which stretches from classical through early Christian and Byzantine times into the Islamic period, but modern archaeological excavations have further demonstrated a past going back, with some interruptions, to at least Neolithic times. Situated in classical times on the river Cydnus, the early Islamic Nahr Baradān[1] and the modern Turkish Tarsus Çay, in the rich agricultural plain of Cilicia, the modern Turkish Çukurova, it owed its florescence firstly, to this same fertility of the local soil; secondly, to its strategic position commanding the southern end of the Cilician Gates across the Taurus Mountains into central Anatolia, the route through which, amongst so many others, Xenophon and Alexander the Great had passed with their armies; and thirdly, to its possessing a fine sheltered harbour, that of Rhēgma, opening the city to the maritime influences of the eastern Mediterranean, including those from the Semitic Near East.[2]

The city is certainly ancient, although not mentioned in the Hittite texts. The Greeks attributed its foundation to Perseus or Heracles. It first appears firmly in history under the Assyrian kings, for one clay tablet records the rebuilding of Tarsus by Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) after a revolt in Kue or Cilicia. It subsequently fell within the Persian sphere of influence, although probably still ruled by native princes who minted coins in the fourth century B.C. with Aramaic legends. Under the Macedonian kings, Tarsus was disputed by the

[1] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and Fr.tr. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, *Les prairies d'or*, Paris 1861-77, I, 264 = ed. and Fr.tr.Ch. Pellat, Paris and Beirut 1962-89, *Les prairies d'or*, § 282; idem, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa 'l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1894, 58, Fr.tr. B. Carra de Vaux, *Le livre de l'avertissement et de la revision*, Paris 1897, 87.

[2] The silting-up by alluvium of the Cilician coastland has meant that the site of Tarsus is now some distance from the Mediterranean; already in early Islamic times, boats could no longer reach the city, and such a place as Qalamiyya (which gave its name to one of the gates of Tarsus, see below, p. 281), on the site of the modern Mersin, served as the city's main port. See M. Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des H'amdanides de Jazîra et de Syrie*, I, Paris 1953, 282.

Seleucids and the Ptolemies and was for a while styled Antioch-on-the-Cydnus in honour of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.). It was harried by the brigands of the Taurus (the region designated by the Romans as Cilicia Aspera) and by the pirates of the Cilician coastlands, until Pompey crushed these marauders in 67 B.C. and made Tarsus the capital of the new Roman province of Cilicia. It achieved fame at this time by the arrival up the Cydnus of Cleopatra's sumptuous barge for a meeting with Mark Antony, and it was also an important intellectual centre, with its own university; amongst its luminaries was the Stoic philosopher Athenodorus Cananites, the tutor of the Emperor Augustus, ensuring imperial patronage for the city from that ruler and from later emperors.[3]

Hence it continued to flourish as a centre of Hellenism, merging into the early Christian period, with the distinction, of course, of being the birthplace of Saul or St. Paul (Acts, xxii, 3) and of enjoying a vigorous intellectual life. Bishops and metropolitans of Tarsus are frequently mentioned in the Acts of the various Councils of the early Church; one of its most celebrated bishops was Diodorus (378-94), founder of the Antioch School of theology and exegesis as opposed to the Alexandrian one. Within the administrative structure of the Byzantine Empire, it became the capital of Cilicia Prima, with Anazarbus (the later Islamic ᶜAyn Zarba) forming the capital of the corresponding eastern half of the province, Cilicia Secunda.[4]

II

Tarsus must have been first threatened by the Muslim Arabs during the caliphates of ᶜUmar I and ᶜUthmān, in what Donner has designated the third phase of the conquest of Syria, extending from roughly 16/637 to roughly 27/647-8, a period of steady advance by the forces of Islam towards the line of the Taurus range and of consolidation in the aftermath of such major victories against the Byzantines of Ajnādayn, Faḥl, Marj al-Ṣuffar and the Yarmūk and the consequent surrender of the major cities of Syria.[5] Once such centres of northern Syria as Ḥimṣ, Aleppo, Qinnasrīn and Antioch, as far eastwards as the northwards bend of the Euphrates, had fallen into Arab hands—without, it seems, very strenuous resistance by the retreating Greek forces—the Arabs reached the march lands whose front line of fortresses were known later

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[3] See Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, new edn., IV.A/2, Stuttgart 1932, art. "Tarsos", cols. 2413-24 (Ruge).

[4] *Ibid.*, cols. 2424-32; Sir William M. Ramsay, *The cities of St. Paul, their influence on his life and thought*, London 1907, 85-244; *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*, new edn. by Josef Höfer *et alii*, Freiburg 1957-67, IX, art. "Tarsos" (O. Volk), col. 1303.

[5] Fred McGraw Donner, *The early Islamic conquests*, Princeton 1981, 111-12.

as the *thughūr* "frontier gaps" or *masāliḥ* "garrisons", strongholds for both defence and offence.[6] The Arabic historical sources state that when the Emperor Heraclius fell back from Edessa into Cilicia (and eventually to Constantinople), he devastated the region between Alexandretta or Iskandarūn and Tarsus, evacuating the personnel of the frontier defences—who were apparently also the cultivators of the region—to Byzantine territory and dismantling the forts there so as to leave an empty zone between the Greek strongholds of western Cilicia and the attacking Arabs.[7]

From now onwards, therefore, throughout the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods, Tarsus was in the front line of attack from both sides. When it first passed under Arab control is unclear, but possession of the city seems in any case to have oscillated between the Greeks and Arabs. In 25/646 the governor of Syria Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān raided into Anatolia as far as Amorion. Finding the zone between Antioch and Tarsus empty, he placed garrisons of Syrian and Jazīran troops there, and then sent Yazīd b. al-Ḥurr al-ʿAbsī on a similar expedition.[8] Then in 93/712 al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik raided into the same region and captured Samosata, Sebasteia, al-M.r.z.bān.y.n. (?)[9] and Tarsus.[10] Garrison troops and settlers were no doubt planted on various occasions by both sides during these decades, such groups often having to flee when armies of the opposing side appeared before these places.

During the early decades of ʿAbbāsid rule, when the Muslims held Tarsus they made it a strongly-fortified concentration-point for volunteer fighters for the faith, *mujāhidūn*, and ghāzīs, who flocked from all over the Islamic lands in order to discharge the duty of holy war against unbelievers. Tarsus marked the western end of the arc of fortresses (*ʿawāṣim*) that stretched eastwards through Adana, Mopsuestia or al-Maṣṣīṣa, ʿAyn Zarba, Marʿash and Ḥadath to Melitene or Malaṭya. These fortresses benefited from a massive budget comprising the revenue from the taxes of the Syrian and Jazīran frontiers, supplemented by subsidies from the general taxation of the caliphate, used for the local garrisons and for the regular expeditions (*ṣawāʾif*) which were mounted into Byzantine territory each spring and summer when the Taurus snows had

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6 The line of defences to the rear, protecting northern Syria and al-Jazīra, was known as the *ʿawāṣim* "protecting fortresses". See *EI*[2] art.s.v. (Canard), and for a detailed geographical survey of the whole frontier region, *idem*, *H'amdanides*, 241-86.

7 Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. de Goeje, *Liber expugnationis regionum*, Leiden 1866, 153; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-Rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, ed. de Goeje *et alii*, *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar ... at-Tabari*, Leiden 1879-1901, I, 2395-6; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi 'l-taʾrīkh*, Beirut 1385-7/1965-7, II, 494: Donner, *op. cit.*, 148-51.

8 Ibn al-Athīr, III, 86.

9 This mysteriously-named fortress is mentioned also by Ṭabarī, II, 1267, as being raided by al-ʿAbbās, together with Ṭ.w.l.s. (?) and Heracleia.

10 Ṭabarī, II, 1236; Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 578.

melted and access to the Anatolian plateau was possible.[11] Such subsidies from central government taxation were in addition to the outfitting and maintenance allowance which seems to have been provided by tribal chiefs leading their own followers for *ghazw* or for garrison duty and which was known as *juᶜl* or *jaᶜāla* or *juᶜāla*, pl. *jaᶜāʾil*.[12]

In 162/778-9 the city was ruinous and presumably abandoned by its former inhabitants, for in that year the ᶜAbbāsid general al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba al-Ṭāʾī (d. 181/797), son of the former *naqīb* or leader in the ᶜAbbāsid *daᶜwa* Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb,[13] came with an army of "the men of Khurasan and the men of Mawṣil and Syria, troop reinforcements from Yemen and volunteers (*muṭṭawwiᶜa*) from Iraq and the Ḥijāz" to the plain (*marj*) of Tarsus. The provenance of these warriors and volunteers is clear and unambiguous with the exception of the *ahl Khurāsān*. A possibility might be that this expression denoted the original Khurasanian troops of the first ᶜAbbāsids, mainly comprising those Arabs who had settled in Khurasan with their tribes in Umayyad times but who, after the successful outcome of the ᶜAbbāsid *daᶜwa*, established themselves in the new capital Baghdad as *Abnāʾ al-Dawla* "Supports of the New Régime".[14] But against this interpretation is the section in the work of an author of Tarsus origin, Abū ᶜAmr ᶜUthmān al-Ṭarsūsī, his *Siyar al-thughūr* "Ways of life along the frontiers", written about two centuries after the episode here treated (see for the author and his book, below, p. 280), on the peopling (*ᶜimāra*) of Tarsus at this time. Thus he states:

I heard Abū Zurᶜa Nuᶜaym b. Aḥmad al-Makkī, in the year 336[/947-8] say: I heard ᶜAbdallāh b. K.l.r.t. say: I heard our shaykhs—may God have mercy on them!—mention that the group of mounted people from Khurasan arrived, in the reign of al-Mahdī, together with his envoys and his troops, with the aim of swelling the population of Tarsus. [He also mentioned] that they established themselves in a place which he described to us, at the Bāb al-Jihād on the western side of the wall of the *muṣallā*, (their

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11 See J.B. Bury, *A history of the Eastern Roman Empire from the fall of Irene to the accession of Basil I* (*A.D. 802-867*), London 1912, 244-9; A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes. I. La dynastie d'Amorium* (820-867), ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard *et alii*, Brussels 1935, 94-7.

12 See M. Bonner, "*Jaᶜāʾil* and Holy War in early Islam", *Der Islam* 68 (1991), 45-64, who cites (p. 45) Balādhurī, 187-8, on the rebuilding of Malaṭya in early ᶜAbbāsid times: that al-Manṣūr re-peopled Malaṭya with a garrison of 4,000 warriors from the army of al-Jazīra, giving them additional pay allowances (*ᶜaṭāʾ*) and provisioning allowances (*maᶜūna*) "in addition to the *juᶜl* which the tribes arrange amongst themselves".

13 See on al-Ḥasan, Patricia Crone, *Slaves on horses, the evolution of the Islamic polity*, Cambridge 1980, 188; Hugh Kennedy, *The early Abbasid caliphate, a political history*, London-Totowa N.J. 1981, 79-80.

14 See David Ayalon, *The military reforms of Caliph al-Muᶜtaṣim: their background and consequences*, unpublished communication for the International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi 1964, Jerusalem 1964, 4-12.

mounts totalling) 4,000 she-camels exactly, on which were written "Balkh", "Khwārazm", "Herat", "Samarqand", "Farghāna" and "Isfījāb". All this lot was born upon Bactrian camels from Khurasan, together with Abū Sulaym, Bashshār and Abū Maᶜrūf, the eunuchs (*al-khadam, al-khuddam*), retainers (lit. "sons", *abnāʾ*) of the rulers.[15]

Ṭarsūsī's information here is so clear and unambiguous that one must accordingly assume that movements from the eastern Persian lands of enthusiastic fighters for the faith began as early as al-Mahdī's caliphate; they are certainly attested in the historical sources for subsequent times (see below, pp. 280, 282, 283-4).

To revert to al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba's expedition, he reported to al-Mahdī that, in his opinion, the city could hold 100,000 inhabitants and that its resettlement and refortification would make it an ideal jumping-off place for offensive operations against the Greeks. Al-Mahdī was impressed by his reasoning, and ordered the rebuilding and garrisoning of strategic points in the region of the *ᶜawāṣim*. Al-Ḥasan began by reconstructing al-Ḥadath, an important strategic point between Marᶜash and Malaṭya commanding the entrance to a pass over the mountains into Anatolia, which had been sacked in 161/778 by the Byzantine general Michael Lachanodrakon,[16] and then the caliph ordered him to undertake similar works at Tarsus.[17]

Al-Ḥasan was not, it seems, able to do this during the remaining six years or so of al-Mahdī's reign, for it fell to that caliph's son Hārūn al-Rashīd in 170/786-7 or 171/787-8 to assume the task, having heard a report that the Byzantines intended to re-occupy Tarsus and refortify it against the Muslims. The commander of the summer raid for that year, Harthama b. Aᶜyan, was ordered to take charge of this, and he deputed the eunuch commander Abū Sulaymān Faraj b. Sulaym for the task. Faraj sent an agent, Abū Salīm, back to Baghdad, and the latter sent out two summonses to arms, for troops to garrison and settle Tarsus once it was ready for occupation. A first group which answered the summonse was that of 3,000 of the *ahl Khurāsān* (see above, p. 271), who marched to Tarsus, and a second one comprising 2,000 men, 1,000 each from al-Maṣṣīṣa and from Antioch. These warriors were attracted thither by the promise of an extra ten dīnārs for each man on top of his usual stipend (*ᶜaṭāʾ*). The two groups united and encamped in the settlements outside the Bāb al-Jihād of Tarsus, the gate which faced towards the Cilician Gates and through which ghāzīs set forth on their expeditions into the *Dār al-Ḥarb*, at the

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[15] Text given in Iḥsān ᶜAbbās (ed.), *Shadharāt min kutub mafqūda fi 'l-taʾrīkh*, Beirut 1408/1988, 452-3.

[16] See *EI*[2] art. "al-Ḥadath" (S. Ory).

[17] Balādhurī, 169, Eng.tr. in E.W. Brooks, "Byzantines and Arabs in the time of the early Abbasids", *English Historical Review* 16 (1901), 90; *EI*[1] art. "Ṭarsūs" (F. Buhl).

beginning of Muḥarram 172/June 788, awaiting the completion of the city's defences and its mosque. The land between the Cydnus and another nearby river was divided into 4,000 *khiṭṭas* or parcels of land, each *khiṭṭa* being 20 *dhirāᶜ*s square, and these were allocated to the troops who settled there in Rabīᶜ II 172/September 788. Command of the new fortress of Tarsus was then allotted by the governor of Syria, the ᶜAbbāsid prince ᶜAbd al-Malik b. Ṣāliḥ b. ᶜAlī:[18] firstly to Yazīd b. Makhlad al-Hubayrī al-Fazārī, who was however driven out by the *ahl Khurāsān*, unable to endure his *Hubayriyya*,[19] and secondly, to Abu 'l-Fawāris (173/789-90).[20]

Tarsus must have been regained by the Byzantines shortly afterwards, although in 194/809-10 the fortress of Adana to its east was rebuilt by Faraj al-Khādim and garrisoned by the *ahl Khurāsān* and others, with the usual enticement of a pay bonus, on the orders of Hārūn al-Rashīd and of his son and successor Muḥammad al-Amīn.[21] Tarsus probably remained in Greek hands during the next twenty years, given that these two decades were ones of prolonged civil warfare and then, after the deposition and killing of al-Amīn in 198/813 by his brother ᶜAbdallāh al-Maʾmūn, of continued disturbance in Baghdad and Iraq and of sectarian rebellion in the Persian lands, when caliphal resources could rarely be spared for reinforcing the Syrian and Jazīran frontiers, although important Arab successes against the Byzantine islands of Crete and Sicily were gained during these years by Muslim bands operating independently of the caliphate, and possession of Crete permitted an expansion of the Muslim corsair fleet, based on the port of Tarsus, which harried the Byzantine coasts in Asia Minor and Greece.[22] Ṭabarī states, at the end of his entry for the year 191/806-7, "After this year, the Muslims did not mount a summer expedition (against the Byzantines) until the year 215(/830-1)".[23] That Byzantium was not able immediately to take the offensive along the Taurus marches was a reflection of the emperors' pre-occupations with the menace of the Bulghars in the Balkans, with internal rebellion (in particular, that of Thomas

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18 See on him, Kennedy, *op. cit.*, 74-5, and C. Edmund Bosworth, "Byzantium and the Syrian frontier in the early ᶜAbbāsid period", *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on the history of Bilād al-Shām, Amman 1410/1990. English and French section*, ed. M.A. al-Bakhit and R. Schick, Amman 1412/1991, 54-5.

19 Presumably his excessive pride in membership of the noble Arab family of ᶜUmar b. Hubayra, prominent servants of the preceding Marwānid dynasty, see Crone, *op. cit.*, 107.

20 Balādhurī, 169-70; Ṭabarī, III, 604, Eng.tr. Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. XXX. The ᶜAbbāsid caliphate in equilibrium*, Albany 1989, 99, with further references in n. 379, to which should be added Masᶜūdī, *Tanbīh*, 189, tr. 255-6, and Bosworth, "Byzantium and the Syrian frontier".

21 Balādhurī, 168.

22 See Hélène Ahrweiler, "L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VII^e^-IX^e^ siècles)", *Revue Historique* 237 (1962), 11-12.

23 Ṭabarī, III, 370, tr. 290.

the Slav) and with other stresses arising from the divisions re-opened by a renewal of the Iconoclastic Controversy.[24]

Towards the end of his reign, when his position as caliph of a largely re-united *Dār al-Islām* was at last assured, al-Maʾmūn in 215/830 turned his attention to the Byzantine frontiers. He penetrated, via Tarsus, into Cappadocia,[25] and the implication of this item of information from the historical sources and from another of the following year, 216/831, that the Emperor of the Byzantines (sc. the second Amorian emperor, Theophilus, who had succeeded Michael II the Stammerer in 829) had slaughtered 1,600 of the people of Tarsus and al-Maṣṣīṣa,[26] implies that the Muslims had at some point before these two years regained control of Tarsus. The caliph therefore undertook expeditions in this latter year 216/831, again penetrating via Heracleia into Cappadocia, and in the next year also.[27] For what was to be his last expedition, in 218/833, he made his base at Tarsus, but it was to the north of the city on the Budandūn or Podandos River, that he died, and his body was brought back to Tarsus for burial there, either on the left side of the mosque (Masʿūdī) or in a house belonging to Hārūn's eunuch Khāqān (Ṭabarī).[28] During the periods when the Muslims held Tarsus, some Muslim legal and educational offices are known to have functioned there: the death in 181/797 of a *faqīh* who had been at Tarsus, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak al-Marwazī, is recorded, as is that, in 224/839, of a scholar from the *abnāʾ ahl Khurāsān* of Baghdad, al-Qāsim b. Sallām, who had been *qāḍī* of Tarsus.[29]

Later in the third/ninth century, the ephemeral caliph al-Muntaṣir, shortly before his death (sc. in 248/862), sent the Turkish slave commander Waṣīf to Tarsus with an army in order to raid the Byzantine lands, but only one dubiously-identifiable fortress, F.rūriyya, was captured.[30] The governor of Egypt, Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, led an expedition in 264/878 through Syria to the

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[24] See Bury, *op. cit.*, 56 ff., 251-4, 462-4; Ahrweiler, *op. cit.*, 26-8; M.V. Anastos, in *The Cambridge medieval history. IV. The Byzantine empire*, ed. J.M. Hussey, Cambridge 1966-7, *Part I. Byzantium and its neighbours*, 92-102.

[25] Ṭabarī, III, 1103, Eng.tr. Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. XXXII. The reunification of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate*, Albany 1987, 185-6; cf. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine empire 324-1453*, Madison and Milwaukee 1964, I, 99-103.

[26] Ṭabarī, III, 1104, tr. Bosworth, *op. cit.*, 187; cf. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 103-4.

[27] Bury, *op. cit.*, 254-6; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, I, 114-21.

[28] Ṭabarī, III, 1104-5, 1134, 1140, 1148, tr. Bosworth, *op. cit.*, 186-7, 224, 231, 240; Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VII, 1-2, 94, 102 = §§ 2694, 2778, 2784; *idem*, *Tanbīh*, 351, tr. 459; cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, I, 121-4.

[29] Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VI, 294 = § 2501; Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. E. Sachau *et alii*, *Biographien Muhammeds, seiner Gefährten und der späteren Träger des Islams bis zum Jahre 230 der Flucht*, Leiden 1904-40, VII/2, 93.

[30] Ṭabarī, III, 1508; Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VII, 300 = § 2990; Ibn al-Athīr, VII, 111; cf. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine empire*, 247-9.

frontier zone, killing the caliphal governor of Tarsus, Sīmā al-Ṭawīl, at Antioch, passing by al-Maṣṣīṣa and Adana, and arriving at Tarsus. Here, according to Masʿūdī, he was in 265/878-9 halted by the caliphal eunuch commander Yāzmān, a *mawlā* of al-Fatḥ b. Khāqān (Yāzmān was later to be buried at the Bāb al-Jihād of Tarsus when in 278/891 he died on *ghazw* within Christian territory[31], who defended the city against Ibn Ṭūlūn on behalf of his caliphal master al-Muʿtamid. According to the account in Ibn al-Athīr (not in Ṭabarī), Aḥmad came to Tarsus from Antioch, resolving to make the city his base for *jihād* against the Byzantines, but it proved impossible for the city to feed the Ṭūlūnid army. Prices rose, the indigenous population suffered hardship and rose up against the occupying Ṭūlūnid troops. At one point, Aḥmad was publicly cursed from the minbar of the Great Mosque in Tarsus at the behest of the ʿAbbāsid caliph.[32] In the end, the governor of Egypt was persuaded to withdraw and return to Syria, having made the point, it was said, that even the great Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn could not prevail against such a tough and intransigent people as the inhabitants of Tarsus; but in reality, he probably had to retreat because he had received news of the rebellion of his son ʿAbbās back in Egypt. All that Ibn Ṭūlūn apparently achieved of his grandiose boasts about conducting *ghazw* was to send an expedition in 268/879-80 of 3,000 men under his commander Sīmā (not to be confused with the caliphal one Sīmā al-Ṭawīl) from Tarsus through the Cilician Gates, but this was halted by the Greeks at Heracleia.[33]

Syria and the western *thughūr* remained under Ṭūlūnid control, which was placed on a legal basis when the caliph al-Muʿtaḍid came to an agreement with Aḥmad's son Khumārawayh and formally granted to the latter the governorship of Syria,[34] and it is recorded that in 281/894 the Ṭūlūnid general Ṭughj b. Juff or b. Shabīb (father of the future governor of Egypt in the fourth/tenth century, Muḥammad al-Ikhshīd) marched from Damascus with an army and from the base of Tarsus attacked Ṭ.rayūn (? Tyriaeon in Pisidia), (?) Malawriya in the region of Burghūth (Balboura, near Tyriaeon) and the Darb al-Rāhib.[35]

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[31] Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 72 = § 3198.

[32] Ṭarsūsī, in *Shadharāt min kutub mafqūda fi 'l-taʾrīkh*, 45.

[33] Ṭabarī, III, 1942, Eng.tr. Philip M. Fields, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. XXXVII. The ʿAbbāsid recovery*, Albany 1987, 6-7; Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 71-2 = § 3197; Ibn al-Athīr, VII, 316-17. Cf. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes. II. La dynastie macédonienne (867-959)*, Part 1, Brussels 1968, 87; Canard, in *ibid.*, Part 2, *Extraits des sources arabes*, Brussels 1950, 7-8, 39, 136; Zaki M. Hassan, *Les Tulunides. Étude de l'Égypte musulman à la fin du IXe siècle 868-905*, Paris 1933, 66-7.

[34] See Hassan, *op. cit.*, 118, 121-2; Rainer Glagow, *Das Kalifat des al-Muʿtaḍid billāh (892-902)*, Bonn 1968, 61-7; *EI²* art. "Khumārawayh" (U. Haarmann).

[35] Ṭabarī, III, 2140, Eng.tr. F. Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. XXXVIII. The return of*

After Khumārawayh's death in 282/896, however, the ᶜAbbāsid caliph recovered direct control of the frontier regions until they passed in the middle years of the fourth/tenth century into the hands of the Ḥamdānids (see below), and during these years Tarsus seems to have remained fairly continuously in Arab hands, despite a general increase in Byzantine pressure on the Muslims.

Frontier zones, like that between the Arabs and Greeks at this time, have always tended to evolve peculiar and characteristic forms of society influenced by both the clashes and the interactions of the two opposing sides, in this case involving two different ethnic groups and two distinct and opposing faiths. One key to the distinctive form of society in the Arab-Greek borderlands lies in the independent-minded fighters for their faiths, ghāzīs and *akritai*, impatient of central control and with their own customs and loyalties.[36] Hence the Muslim Syrian and Jazīran *thughūr* often showed themselves disinclined to accept caliphal control, preferring the authority of their local amīrs, and the independent spirit of the warriors of Cilicia was shown in 288/901 when al-Muᶜtaḍid had to go there in person in order to suppress at ᶜAyn Zarba the rebellion of the eunuch Waṣīf, who seems to have had ambitions of succeeding to the Ṭūlūnid governorship of Syria and the western *thughūr*. The caliph's irritation with the seditious-minded local people was shown in his actions at Tarsus. Although he granted *amān* to those notables of the city suspected of complicity in Waṣīf's revolt, he carried off some of these to Baghdad, including the imām of the Friday mosque, Abū Isḥāq, and sailors from the port of Tarsus, whose warships (*al-marākib al-ḥarbiyya*) he burnt; these had been used in naval warfare against the Greeks, and Ṭabarī remarks that the caliph's act of spite against the mariners of Tarsus weakened the offensive capabilities of the Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean.[37]

In 203/906 the Byzantine commander Andronicus Ducas defected from the Emperor Leo VI's service and fled to the protection of the caliph al-Muktafī

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the caliphate to Baghdad, Albany 1985, 14; Masᶜūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 146 = 3286; Ibn al-Athīr, VII, 467. Cf. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, 124; Canard, in *ibid.*, II/2, 41-2, 140; Hassan, *op. cit.*, 123.

[36] Similar phenomena are observable at the opposite end of the Islamic world, in the Iberian peninsula, where Muslim *murābiṭūn* and *mujāhidūn* faced Christian warriors, these last including members of religio-military orders; see the pertinent remarks of Amerigo Castro, *The structure of Spanish history*, Princeton 1954, 202 ff.

[37] Ṭabarī, III, 2199-2200, tr. Rosenthal, 90-1; Masᶜūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 197-8 = § 3336. Cf. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, 140-1; Canard, in *ibid.*, II/2, 15-16, 42; Glagow, *op. cit.*, 74-80. In practice, Muslim naval power cannot have been seriously impaired; in 289/902 an Arab fleet attacked the shores of Greece, ravaging the coast of Thessaly and attempting a landing in Attica, and in 291/904 the Arabs reached the Hellespont and attacked Thessalonica. See Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, 157-81; Canard, in *The Cambridge medieval history. IV. The Byzantine empire*, Part 1, 716-17.

at Tarsus, eventually passing on to Baghdad and becoming a Muslim.[38] In 312/924 Tarsus was the base for a naval expedition by the *amīr al-thughūr*, the eunuch Thamal al-Dulafī, which made contact with the king of the Bulghars, Simeon, at some point on the coasts of Byzantium, leading to the appearance (without, however, any recorded consequences) of a deputation of Bulghars at Tarsus.[39] In 319/931 Thamal made two incursions by land into Anatolia, penetrating in the course of the second one as far as Amorion, which had been reconstructed after its celebrated devastation by the caliph al-Muᶜtaṣim in 223/838, and bringing back to Tarsus numerous captives, the women and children of whom were sold for 136,000 dīnārs.[40] Amongst the good works of the caliph al-Qāhir (320-2/932-4) is mentioned the repopulation and refortification of the marches, including Tarsus, Adana, al-Maṣṣīṣa and Marᶜash.[41]

However, this century saw in general a resurgence of Byzantine arms under the capable and energetic Macedonian emperors, their policy being aimed specifically at the recovery of territories along the Syro-Jazīran borders and in Armenia lost to the Arabs three centuries before. The brunt of their offensive into southern Anatolia and the frontier regions came to fall on the Arab dynasty of the Ḥamdānids, on Nāṣir al-Dawla Ḥasan b. Abi 'l-Hayjāᵓ Ḥusayn of Mawṣil and his brother Sayf al-Dawla ᶜAlī of Aleppo. In the middle years of the century they managed to stem for a while the Byzantine advance, although the key point of the eastern *thughūr*, Malaṭya, had been captured by the Greeks firstly in 319/931 and then definitively in 322/934, to remain in Byzantine hands till 1101.[42]

But Sayf al-Dawla's campaign of 339/950 into central Anatolia, on which he was accompanied by the poet al-Mutanabbī and in which 4,000 men of Tarsus took part under the Qāḍī Abu 'l-Ḥusayn, was ultimately a disaster for

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[38] See Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 181-9, with references, to which should be added Canard, "Deux episodes des relations diplomatiques arab-byzantines au Xᵉ siècle", *BEO* 13 (1949-51), 56-9.

[39] Masᶜūdī, *Murūj*, II, 16-18 = § 456. See also Canard, "Arabes et Bulgares au début du Xᵉ siècle", *Byzantion* 11 (1936), 216-23; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 253-4.

[40] Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 233-4; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 265-6; Canard, in *ibid.*, II/2, 154. Muslim prisoners were doubtless taken in similar numbers by the Byzantines on other occasions. The geographer Ibn Rusta (who probably wrote at the end of the third/beginning of the tenth century), in his account of Constantinople derived from a Muslim captive there, Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, mentions that there was a special prison in the Byzantine capital for the *ahl Ṭarsūs* (*Kitāb al-Aᶜlāq al-nafīsa*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden 1892, 120, Fr.tr. Gaston Wiet, Cairo 1955, *Les atours précieux*, 136. Cf. J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge, ethnologische und historisch-geographische Studien zur Geschichte des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (*ca. 840-940*), Leipzig 1903, 216, and Canard, in Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/2, 379-82, 385, noting that the Tarsus prisoners were in 946 invited to an imperial banquet given for Muslim envoys to Constantinople). There were, of course, periodic exchanges of Muslim and Christian prisoners, the famous *fidā*'s; see *EI*² Suppl.art. "Fidāᵓ" (Ch. E. Dufourq), and *EI*² art. "Lamas-Ṣū" (Cl. Huart).

[41] Masᶜūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 294-5 = § 3449.

[42] Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 266-70; Canard, *H'amdanides*, 733-5.

the Arabs, hence dubbed the *ghazwat al-muṣība*.[43] Also, whilst Sayf al-Dawla was in 345/956 engaged in land operations against the Greeks, the Strategus of the Cibyrrhaeot theme, Basil Hexamilites, won a crushing victory over a Muslim fleet that had set sail from the port of Tarsus in order to harry the coasts of the Byzantine empire; 1,800 Muslims were killed, and the Greeks went on to burn the environs of Tarsus.[44] The pace of Byzantine successes accelerated after the Domesticus Nicephorus Phocas (subsequently Emperor 963-9) and then the Strategus of Mesopotamia, John Tzimisces (subsequently Emperor 969-76) took charge of operations in the east.

It was during these years that Nicephorus and Tzimisces, the latter by now Domesticus, in 354/965 captured al-Maṣṣīṣa and then Tarsus, with the population of Adana also fleeing after the abandonment of their city.[45] Tarsus was to remain in Christian hands—successively Greek, Crusader and Armenian—until its reconquest for the Muslims in 1275 by the Mamlūk amīr, later sultan, al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn.[46] The city was surrendered to the Emperor by Sayf al-Dawla's representative there Ibn al-Zayyāt and his *mawlā* Rashīq al-Nasīmī on a promise of *amān* or safe conduct for its inhabitants. Accordingly, on entering Tarsus Nicephorus allowed all the Muslims who wished to leave to take with them all they could carry, including their weapons; but their houses and property fell to the incomers. The unnamed source cited in the seventh/thirteenth century Muslim geographer Yāqūt's account of Tarsus says that the congregational mosque and other places of worship were demolished, Qurʾān copies burnt, and the extensive treasuries of weapons, which had been accumulated there since Umayyad times, confiscated.[47] However, the source quoted by the early fifth/eleventh century historian Miskawayh—and he himself was of course writing much nearer to the events in question—states that the congregational mosque was turned into a stable for the imperial horses and its lamps removed to Constantinople, but says nothing about the destruction of other mosques.[48]

According again to Yāqūt's unnamed source, many of the people became Christian and received much favour from the imperial authorities; the small number of Muslims who stayed behind became liable to a poll-tax, just as the

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[43] Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 485-6; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 342-4; Canard, *op. cit.*, 763-70.
[44] Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 518; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II/1, 360; Canard, *op. cit.*, 793.
[45] Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 560-1; Canard, *op. cit.*, 820-3.
[46] See on the place's subsequent history, *EI*[1] art.s.v.
[47] *Muʿjam al-buldān*, Beirut 1374-6/1955-7, IV, 28.
[48] *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. and Eng.tr. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth, in *The eclipse of the ʿAbbasid caliphate*, Oxford 1920-1, II, 211, tr. V. 225. The Byzantine historian George Cedrenus records that the gates of both Tarsus and al-Maṣṣīṣa were carried off as trophies to Constantinople and gilded, with one set placed in the citadel and the other on the wall of the Golden Gate; see *EI*[2] art. "al-Maṣṣīṣa" (E. Honigmann).

Christians had been subject to the *jizya* under Muslim rule, but many Muslims left. Yāqūt further quotes Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Tanūkhi (sc. Abu 'l-Qāsim ᶜAlī b. al-Muḥassin, son of the author of *al-Faraj baᶜd al-shidda* and the *Nishwat al-muḥāḍara* and born in 365/976, hence from the generation after the events in question[49]) who related that a group of Muslim refugees from Tarsus had told him that when Nicephorus conquered the city, he set up outside it two standards and his herald proclaimed:

"He who wishes to live in the territory of the merciful king, and who loves equity and justice, and who desires security for his property, his family, his own person, his children, and who wishes the roads to be kept safe, and who desires sound laws and fair treatment and the preservation of the sanctity of womanhood, etc. etc.", and he named a number of fine things, "let him come under this banner and return with the king to the land of Rūm; but he who wants fornication and sodomy, tyrannical laws and practices, the exacting of taxes and the confiscation of estates and seizure of property", and he enumerated various unpleasant things of this sort, "let him rally under the other flag and go to the land of Islam".

Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Tanūkhī goes on to relate that those Muslims who decided to emigrate had to leave behind their slave concubines, who now regarded themselves as free under the laws of the Christians and who often retained their children so that they grew up as Christians or else abandoned them altogether. For transporting the Muslim refugees' goods to their refuge at Antioch, the Muslims could only secure mounts from the Greeks, who charged them a hiring fee of one-third of the goods.[50] Miskawayh's source, on the other hand, emphasises the Emperor's fairness and reasonableness towards the emigrants, who included Rashīq al-Nasīmī, sending with them an escort of three Patricii, fending off en route Armenian marauders and showing in general his solicitude for them until he received news of their safe arrival in Antioch; other emigrants were provided with transport for travelling by sea to wherever they wanted to go.[51]

This, then, was the end of Muslim rule in Tarsus for over three centuries. Pleas for help by the beleaguered population of Tarsus, who had latterly felt the imminence of Byzantine attack, were doubtless listened to with sympathy

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49 al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, Cairo 1349/1931, XII, 115, no. 6558; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aᶜyān*, ed. ᶜAbbās, Beirut 1968-72, IV, 162, no. 557, Eng.tr. M.G. de Slane, Paris 1842-71, II, 567.

50 Yāqūt, IV, 28-9.

51 Miskawayh, in *op. cit.*, II, 211, 214, tr. V, 225-6. According to the geographer Maqdisī, writing some twenty years after the event in question, the greater part of the *ahl al-thughūr* of Tarsus transferred to Bāniyās in northern Palestine, forming a prosperous element there (*Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maᶜrifat al-aqālīm*, ed. de Goeje, *Descriptio imperii moslemici*, 2nd ed., Leiden 1906, 160, partial Fr.tr. André Miquel, *La meilleure répartition pour la connaissance des provinces*, Damascus 1963, 176). See in general on the capture of the city, Canard, *H'amdanides*, 822-3.

without attracting much practical, immediate assistance (but see below); no doubt Muslim powers in other parts of the Islamic world were used to oscillations in the balance of Arab-Byzantine fortunes along the frontiers and did not at this point regard the threatened position of Tarsus as anything unusual or special. These appeals are described in detail in the already-mentioned *Siyar al-thughūr* of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān al-Ṭarsūsī (see above, p. 271), who was clearly himself a native of Tarsus, who functioned as *qāḍī* of the northern Syrian towns of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān and Kafar Ṭāb and who was a contemporary of these events (the actual dates of his birth and death are unknown, but he composed his book for the vizier of the Regent Kāfūr in Egypt, Ibn Ḥinzāba, who lived 309-91/921-1001). His section on "The cries for help (*istiṣrākh*) in saving Tarsus" mentions how the continuous harrying of the city by the Greeks had led its people to send delegates to Ikhshīdid Egypt and ʿAbbāsid-Būyid Baghdad, seeking help, but there had been no response. In fact, George Cedrenus states that Kāfūr had sent a rescue fleet under the command of Faṭh al-Thamalī, but this arrived three days too late, hence returned homewards,[52] and some news of the investiture of Tarsus does seem to have been spread around the Islamic world; in distant Nishapur, the pious Shāfiʿī scholar Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Tamīmī, known as Ḥusaynak (d. 375/985-6), felt impelled to sell two valuable estates for 50,000 dirhams and send to the Byzantine frontiers ten warriors instead of himself going,[53] but this was clearly a case of too little too late.

Ṭarsūsī continues this section with a pathetic account of the last performance of the Friday *ṣalāt* and *khuṭba* in the congregational mosque of Tarsus on Friday, 10 Shaʿbān 354/10 August 965, five days before the city was abandoned.[54]

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[52] Cited in *ibid.*, 823.

[53] Samʿānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Yamānī *et alii*, Hyderabad 1382-1402/1962-82, III, 80-1; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa 'l-umam*, Hyderabad 1357-9/1938-41, VII, 128.

[54] Cited in *Shadharāt min kutub mafqūda fi 'l-taʾrīkh*, 47, 454-6. The extracts from Ṭarsūsī's (now lost) *Siyar al-thughūr* contained in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's biographical dictionary of the scholars and notable persons of his native Aleppo, the *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab*, were noted thirty-five years ago by the late Marius Canard, who utilised the Istanbul manuscripts to give an account of, *inter alia*, Ṭarsūsī's information on the city of Tarsus ("Quelques observations sur l'introduction géographique de la Bughyat atʾ-tʾalab de Kamâl ad-Dîn Ibn al-ʿAdîm d'Alep", *Annales IEO Alger* 15 [1957]. 47-53 = *Miscellanea orientalia*, Variorum Reprints, London 1973, no. X); but Canard's pioneering notice seem to have attracted little subsequent attention. The various items of information by Ṭarsūsī have now been conveniently collected together by Professor Iḥsān ʿAbbās (see n. 15 above), and a more detailed study of them, with a verbatim English translation of the greater part of them, is given by the present writer in his "Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān al-Ṭarsūsī's *Siyar al-thughūr* and the last years of Arab rule in Tarsus (fourth/tenth century)", to appear in *Graeco-Arabica* 5 (Athens 1992).

III

We possess acounts of Tarsus in its last decades of Muslim rule from some of the Arab geographers of the fourth/tenth century and from Yāqūt, whose source of Abu 'l-Qāsim ᶜAlī al-Tanūkhī has already been mentioned (above, p. 279). According to the cursory accounts of Iṣṭakhrī and Yāqūt, the city had a double wall and a wide defensive ditch and rampart, with six gates, and was bisected by the Nahr al-Baradān.[55] But by far the most apparently accurate, detailed and enlightening description is to be found in the pages of Ṭarsūsī's account of life along the frontiers. According to him, the city indeed had two walls, but these were each pierced by five, not six, gates of iron (one of them having been blocked up as ill-omened, having been the point of departure for a raid whose participants were totally annihilated by the Greeks), those of the outer, enclosing one being plated with iron sheeting (*ḥadīd mulabbas*).[56] Those of the inner walls, adjacent to the trench and rampart (*khandaq*) were of solid iron (*ḥadīd muṣmat*). The first wall, protecting the *madīna*, was a high one and had lofty vantage-points (*shurrāfa*)[57] where men could be stationed in times of external threat and shoot off arrows. It also had a hundred towers, in several of which were mounted various types of ballista (*majānīq* and *ᶜarrādāt*) and in the rest were stationed archers with crossbows (*qisiyy al-rijl*). The five gates are named as the Bāb al-Shām, the Bāb al-Ṣafṣāf (i.e. that leading to the fortress of "The Willows"[58] beyond the northern end of the Cilician Gates), the Bāb al-Jihād, the Bāb Qalamiyya (i.e. that on the south side of the city leading to the port of Tarsus)[59] or Bāb Ṭarsūs, and the Bāb al-Baḥr (? adjacent to the Cydnus river).[60] According to an informant of Ṭarsūsī, one Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Miḥāl, citing one Ibn ᶜAṭiyya, in 290/903 the streets and alleys (*sikak*) of Tarsus had been enumerated at 2,000, comprising throughways and cul-de-sacs, and the houses at 34,000. Of these houses, it could be taken that two-thirds were for the lodging of ghāzīs and religious enthusiasts (called here *ᶜuzzāb*, literally "batchelors"), stemming from all parts of the Islamic world, and the remaining third for the permanent popula-

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[55] Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa 'l-mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, *Viae regnorum. Descriptio ditionis moslemicae*, Leiden 1927, 64; Yāqūt, IV, 28.

[56] See on these two expressions, Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, I, 844, II, 511.

[57] See *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum. IV. Indices, glossarium et addenda et emendanda*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden 1879, 273: *shurrāfa, shurfa, sh.rāfiyya = acrotorion muri.*

[58] See for this place, G. Le Strange, *The lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge 1905, 134-5, 139; E. Honigmann, *Byzance et les Arabes. IV. Die Ostgrenze des byzantinisches Reiches von 363 bis 1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quelle*, Brussels 1935, 42.

[59] See Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II/1, 102 and n. 5.

[60] *Shadharāt*, 449-51.

tion (*muta'ahhilīn*), these houses being either owned privately or established as *awqāf* for pious purposes.[61] The procedure for the summonse to arms (*nafīr*) of the ghāzīs when an expedition was being organised is described in great detail by Ṭarsūsī. The market inspector (*al-mutawallī bi-ʿamal al-ḥisba*) and a special staff of footsoldiers under his command took the lead in organising this; if a serious situation arose, such as an imminent threat of attack on the city, a general muster (*ḥashad*) of the whole populace might be proclaimed. Even a corps of boy volunteers, those who had not yet attained the age of *ḥilm* or adult character, armed with weapons appropriately sized for them, was organised, in the days just before Tarsus's surrender to the Greeks, by a certain man there called Ru'ba, so Ṭarsūsī recounts.[62]

Ṭarsūsī's picture agrees very much with another main source on Tarsus at this time, that of Ibn Ḥawqal. This last geographer and traveller speaks of Tarsus in the past tense, for when the definitive recension of his *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ* was put together in *ca*. 378/988,[63] Tarsus was no longer within the *Dār al-Islām*, and another geographer, Maqdisī, writing in *ca*. 375/985, specifically disclaimed coverage of Tarsus and its region since these were now in the hands of the Rūm.[64] Ibn Ḥawqal presumably derived his information from his personal visit to Tarsus (which he mentions specifically), i.e. before the Byzantine occupation; whether he had any contact with Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān al-Ṭarsūsī is unknown, but their accounts are complementary rather than overlapping.[65]

Ibn Ḥawqal says that he had been told that there had usually been as many as 100,000 cavalrymen stationed at Tarsus at a time near to that of his own visit (this number seems excessively high). The ghāzīs came from all the major cities and regions of the Islamic world, from Khurasan, Sijistān and Kirmān in the east, from Yemen in the south and the Maghrib in the west, each of these having its own special residence (*dār*) and *ribāṭ* in Tarsus. The warriors and *murābiṭūn* were supported by living allowances and subsidies from the charity of the pious, who used to vie with each other in such good works, and from special dues imposed by the rulers, whilst in their home cities and provinces leading men and notables had constituted agricultural lands, hostelries (*funduq*s), houses, baths, caravanserais, etc., as *awqāf* for the support of their local fighters for the faith and had often bequeathed sums for them in their wills.[66] Ṭarsūsī indeed, specifies some of these benefactors, who ranged from

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61 Cited in *Shadharāt*, 448-52.

62 *Ibid*., 453-4.

63 See *EI*² art. "Ibn Ḥawḳal" (Miquel).

64 Maqdisī, 152, tr. 156.

65 Ibn Ḥawqal was not, in this instance, drawing upon his predecessor Iṣṭakhrī, whose account, from a slightly earlier date than Ibn Ḥawqal's, is much less detailed and circumstantial.

66 *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J.H. Kramers, *Opus geographicum ... liber imaginis terrae*, Leiden

members of the caliphal family itself downwards: thus there was a "great house", *dār kabīr*, built by Sayyida, the mother of the caliph al-Muqtadir, housing 150 bold military slaves (*ghulāms*) and which had an income of 100,000 dīnārs a year, and a *dār* of Qabīḥa, wife of al-Mutawakkil and mother of al-Muᶜtazz, again accommodating 150 *ghulāms* and with a leader (*raʾīs*) appointed from amongst the *mawālī* of al-Muᶜtazz.[67]

A third geographical source of Tarsus at this time, known from its citation by Ibn al-ᶜAdīm again (see above, n. 54), is the author Abu 'l-Ḥusayn al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Muhallabī, who wrote a *Kitāb al-Masālik wa 'l-mamālik*, now only partially extant, for the Fāṭimid caliph al-ᶜAzīz (365-86/975-96), the work being, accordingly, known popularly as the *ᶜAzīzī*[68] Muhallabī describes the *dūr* there of the various groups from the Islamic lands and their universal interest in equitation, the martial arts and other methods of training for war. But he denounces the cupidity, the harshness and the violence of the local Tarsiots,[69] and the dangerous divisions and rivalries within them such as that between Sayf al-Dawla's representative there Ibn al-Zayyāt and the ghulāms of the former amīr of Tarsus, Thamal.[70]

These passages of Ṭarsūsī, Ibn Ḥawqal and Muhallabī are interesting for various reasons. They throw light on the intensity of the spirit of militant *jihād* along the *thughūr* at this time, one attested not only by the Muslim historians but also in *adab* and other literary works. It had always been regarded as a pious act to further the cause of holy war along the frontiers; thus on his deathbed in 331/943 the Sāmānid amīr Naṣr b. Aḥmad made a bequest of 1,000 riding beasts from the royal stables for *jihād* against the pagan Turks of Central Asia.[71] These feelings were especially stirred up by such events as Nicephorus's occupation of Crete in 350/961 and the Byzantine advance along the Syrian and Jazīran marches. The unexpected capture and sacking of Sayf

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and Leipzig 1938-9, I, 183-4, Fr.tr. Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre*, Beirut-Paris 1964, I, 181-2; cf. for the information of the geographers on Tarsus, Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, London 1890, 377-8.

67 Cited in *Shadharāt*, 451-2.

68 See on Muhallabī, *EI²* art.s.v. (Ch. Pellat).

69 Harshness and boorish manners were a product of the uncertainty and turbulence of life along the *thughūr*; in another part of the Islamic world, Maqdisī characterises the inhabitants of Isfījāb, on the northern frontier of Transoxania facing the Turkish steppes, as rough and self-satisfied, like wild beasts (273, cited in Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids, their empire in Afghanistan and eastern Iran 994-1040*. Edinburgh 1963, 32).

70 Quoted in Canard, "Quelques observations sur l'introduction géographique de la Bughyat atʾ-tʾalab", 46-7.

71 Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī, *Kitāb al-Awrāq. Akhbār al-Rāḍī wa 'l-Muttaqī*, ed. J. Heyworth-Dunne, Cairo 1354/1935, 237, French tr. Canard, *Akhbâr ar-Râḍî billâh wa 'l-Muttaqî billâh. II. Histoire d'Al-Muttaqî*, Algiers 1950, 70.

al-Dawla's capital Aleppo during the raid of 351/962 by the Byzantine emperor[72] sent shock waves through the Muslim populations of Syria and al-Jazīra, and had repercussions in certain outbreaks of popular discontent in distant Baghdad.[73] The historians record the appearance of bands of ghāzīs from Khurasan and the East, who made considerable nuisances of themselves to the local peoples through whose lands they marched westwards. Thus in 353/964, 5,000 Khurasanians passed via Azerbaijan and Armenia through Ḥarrān in northern al-Jazīra with the aim of joining Sayf al-Dawla at Aleppo, and then fought at this side in Cilicia;[74] and two years later, in what the sources call the *ʿām al-nafīr*, a body of Khurasanian ghāzīs estimated at 20,000 appeared at Rayy, demanding large subsidies from the Būyid Rukn al-Dawla and clashing violently with the amīr's Daylamī troops until they at last moved on, eventually arriving in Mayyāfāriqīn in Diyār Bakr, where they joined Sayf al-Dawla's son and took part in various raids.[75]

We further discern from these passages the importance along these frontiers of an institution of mediaeval Islam which merits a more detailed study from scholars than it has until now received, sc. the ribāṭ. This term probably meant in origin "a place for tethering (*rabaṭa*) horses", echoing Qurʾān, VIII, 62/60, in which the believers are enjoined to launch against their enemies at the frontier their full strength, including mounted pickets, *ribāṭ al-khayl*. The ribāṭ is an institution found in the early centuries of Islam wherever there was a frontier, whether by land or sea, facing powerful adversaries in the *Dār al-Ḥarb*. The ribāṭs were frontier fortresses which also partook of the nature of religious retreats for the mystically-inclined, so that enthusiasts could not only meet in the ribāṭs in order to defend the frontiers and to raid into infidel territory but also to practise religious and ascetic exercises.[76] *Murābiṭūn* did not

[72] Miskawayh, in *The eclipse*, II, 192-4, tr. V. 208-11; Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 540-2.

[73] When the news reached the City of Peace, the people locked the doors of the markets and flocked to the caliphal palace, demanding that al-Muṭīʿ should lead in person a retaliatory *jihād* (Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, cited in *The eclipse*, II, 200-1 n. 1).

[74] Miskawayh, in *The eclipse*, II, 201-3, tr. V. 216-17; Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 552.

[75] Miskawayh, in *The eclipse*, II, 222-8, tr. V. 234-42; Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, 569-71; Dhahabī, cited in *The eclipse*, V, 242 n. 1; cf. H. Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig, die Buyiden im Iraq (945-1055)*, Beirut-Wiesbaden 1969, 146-7. The biographer Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī mentions a poem said to have been written in 355/966 by the great Shāfiʿī scholar of Transoxania. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī, in response to a poem by Nicephorus (a lengthy *mīmiyya* in the *ṭawīl* metre and in perfect Arabic!) taunting the Muslims for their humiliation at Byzantine hands; see *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya al-kubrā*, Cairo 1224/1915. II. 181-4 = Cairo 1383-96/1964-76, III, 205-9.

[76] See *EI*[1] art. "Ribāṭ" (G. Marçais) which deals only, however, with the institution in the Muslim West. For the central and eastern Islamic lands—where the institution was equally important and where the terms *ribāṭ* and *khān(a)qāh* became virtually interchangeable—see *EI*[2] art. "Khānḳāh" (J. Chabbi).

necessarily spend all their lives, or even long periods of them, engaged in these activities; we know that, in the fourth/tenth century, several of the Transoxanian ribāṭs against the Turks of the outer steppes were manned on a rotating, shift basis,[77] and Ṭarsūsī's account seems to imply that at Tarsus, enthusiasts might reside in the ribāṭs there for limited periods and then return to their permanent homes elsewhere. But there emerges clearly from all this that the ribāṭs owes its existence to the fusion within Islam of the life of rigorous asceticism and the life of combat against the unbelievers—a fusion paralleled in the Christian world of a slightly later period than this by the appearance of the Crusaders in the Levant—and the Islamic jurists and the Ṣūfī masters were well aware of the convergence of the two strands when they analysed the *jihād* into a greater *jihād*, the spiritual fight against the errant ways of the soul prone to evil, and lesser *jihād*, military action against the enemies of Islam.[78] Ribāṭs were to be found in al-Andalus, where conditions in many ways replicated those of the Anatolian frontierlands and where many place names Rábita, Rávita or Rápita still exist in Spain and Portugal; and an origin of the peculiarly Spanish Christian militiary orders of Calatrava, Santiago and Alcántara from the Islamic *murābiṭūn*, people of the ribāṭs, was suggested as far back as 1820 by the Spanish historian of Muslim Spain José Conde.[79] Ribāṭs were thick along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of the Maghrib, from the mouth of the Senegal River to Tripoli, as is shown by the existence today of the place name Rabat from Morocco to Malta and Sicily. At the other end of the Islamic world, they were to be found in Central Asia, facing the pagan Turkish steppes, and in Afghanistan, around the pagan enclave of Ghūr and on the borderlands with the Indian world.

Within the city of Tarsus, as we have seen, the words for these residences of ghāzīs and focuses of spiritual-mystical experience were most commonly the general term *dār* and the more technical one of *ribāṭ* (Ṭarsūsī also uses that of *zāwiya*, more specifically a place of religious retreat and withdrawal from the world). But along the Syrian and Jazīran marches in general, the general Arabic words for fortress or stronghold, *qalʿa* and *ḥiṣn*, seem to have been used in preference to the more technical *ribāṭ* (although one also finds the descriptive term *maslaḥa* "guard post" used, notably during the period of the first Arab conquests), so that *ribāṭ* has left little impression on the toponomy of the region; only Maqdisī calls the stronghold attributed to Alexander the Great Ḥiṣn Dhi 'l-Qarnayn, to the north of Mayyāfāriqīn or Martyropolis, the Ribāṭ

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[77] W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol invasion*, Eng.tr., London 1928, 175-6; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 31-2.

[78] See *EI*² art. "Djihād" (E. Tyan).

[79] Castro, *The structure of Spanish history*, 88-9.

of Dhu 'l-Qarnayn.[80] On the other hand, names of the form Qalᶜat Jaᶜbar, Qalᶜat al-Najm, Qalᶜat al-Quṣayr, Ḥiṣn Maslama, Ḥiṣn Kayfā, Ḥiṣn Manṣūr, Ḥiṣn al-Kawkab, etc., are very numerous.[81] But whatever the precise nomenclature, the existence of the institution is undoubted.

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80 Maqdisī, 20, tr. 55, 146.
81 See Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches*, index.